



# Press Release



**Congressman John Conyers, Jr.  
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**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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**Conyers Pushes Amendment  
To Allow for Hearings on the Administration's Ethical Abuse**

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee issued the following statement at today's Judiciary Committee organizational meeting:

"I offer this amendment because of any lack of checks and balances in our system of government as it is presently constituted.

Right now, the Republicans control the House, the Senate and the White House. When the Administration crosses any ethical or legal line, it is Congress' job to conduct oversight. However, all too frequently the Republican Congress has ignored its responsibility. Under my amendment, if unethical or illegal conduct occurs, the Minority would be given the right to insist that the Committee look into the abuse.

To the Chairman's credit, he has been willing to take on the Administration when he disagreed with what they were doing. In particular, I appreciate his willingness to insist that the Department of Justice respond to our oversight questions on the Patriot Act and our review of the FBI's handling of confidential informants.

However, I believe that all too often ethical transgressions by this Administration have not been vigorously pursued. If we are going to get to the bottom of these scandals and misuse of governments funds, we must have the ability to bring the relevant parties before this Committee under oath.

The list of transgressions by this Administration that have not been given adequate hearings in the Congress is breathtaking.

- The torture and prison abuse at Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo and Afghanistan has received cursory examination at best. The Department of Justice and the White House Counsel's role in condoning torture remains unexamined.
- The mistreatment of detainees held in the New York area in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack.
- Vice President Cheney's involvement in the award of sole-source, no-bid contract with his former employer Halliburton for Iraqi reconstruction work at a time that he continued to receive deferred compensation from the company.
- The leaking of a CIA operative's name to columnist Robert Novak and others by Administration employees.
- Allegations that former Enron executive and Secretary of the Army and Thomas White engaged in insider trading involving the sale of more than \$12 million in Enron stock

- Conflicts of interest and misconduct involving Richard Perle, former Chairman of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board.
- Allegations that the Bush Administration agreed to issue administrative legal actions cutting back on the employment rights of minorities, including gays and lesbians, in exchange for obtaining the Salvation Army's political support for faith based legislation.

If we have learned anything in the Congress, its that the Administration cannot be counted on to investigate themselves. I know that there can be law enforcement sensitivities involved in oversight hearings of improprieties, but we learned during this Congress' constant review of allegations of improprieties by the Clinton administration that those can be worked through.

Mr. Chairman, this is a very narrow amendment, designed to respond to the most serious ethical and legal lapses. I offer this amendment respectfully, and urge its adoption."

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